



Secretariat of the Former President

(H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom)

17 October 2010

The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,
Prime Minister's Office,
10, Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA, United Kingdom.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I write to bring to your urgent attention the escalation of attempts by the current government of Maldives of President Mohamed Nasheed, in recent days, to harass and intimidate me and my family. Since I stepped down from presidential office in November 2008, the present government has, under various guises and by unlawfully utilizing the powers at the government's disposal, attempted to incarcerate me on false accusations of murder, rights violations and corruption.

The strategy that the current ruling party – the MDP – had employed during the presidential election campaign of 2008 was based predominantly on attempting to smear my reputation, spreading disinformation, and baselessly accusing me of corruption and misappropriation of State funds. All such allegations of corruption, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds and property are baseless and entirely untrue, as are those of torture, repression and unlawful detention during my presidency. I have always adhered to the letter and spirit of the Constitution and governing laws of the Maldives.

Nearly two years after the MDP government assumed presidency, Nasheed and his government have failed to uncover a single shred of evidence to substantiate any of these allegations.

In spite of the limited resources at my disposal, I continue to take up many of these smear allegations in courts of law. In one such case, Nasheed's top political aide Hassan Afeef accused me in public of embezzling post-tsunami donor aid by the State of Qatar to the effect of US\$ 80 million. I filed a slander case against Afeef in the Civil Court, and the judgment absolved me of any wrongdoing, while finding Afeef guilty of slander.

Nasheed also established, in late 2008, an extra-judicial 'Presidential Commission to Investigate Corruption and Embezzlement of State Funds by the Former Government', with close associates and persons known to hold personal grudges against me on its panel. Having scrutinized each and every document at the government's disposal (that I dutifully handed over to the new administration when leaving presidential office in 2008), they have failed to find any evidence to link me to any wrongdoing. The Commission did, however, unlawfully attempt to have me arrested and incarcerated, in 2009. Yet again, the court of law passed a restraining order against the Commission. It must be noted that Article 128 of the Constitution grants me, as a Former President, the right to dignity, security and respect.

As you probably know, I retired from politics earlier this year, and have since been dedicating my time to the development of a not-for-profit charitable foundation that I established earlier this year in my name – The Maumoon Foundation.

As is now 'customary' in the run up to any election here in the Maldives, the MDP government has yet again escalated its attempts to harass me given that Local Council Elections are expected to be held in the next few months. After the government's defeat in last year's parliamentary elections, the popularity ratings of the ruling MDP have fallen further in recent months, as a result of the government's failure to deliver on its campaign promises and its lack of respect for the law. On the other hand, I continue to enjoy the strong support, love and affection of the people and have been voted by the public as 'Personality of the Year' in both years since stepping down from the presidency.

The government has, yet again, directed its entire propaganda machinery against me. The latest episode involves unsubstantiated allegations by an elderly man by the name of Ahmed Shafeeq that I had, during my tenure as President, ordered the murder of 111 dissidents. In a book authored by this Shafeeq, which was ceremoniously released last week by Mohamed Nasheed himself, it is accused that I had also ordered this man's arrest and supposed torture in prison. In a country of just over 300,000, it is safe to assume that even one 'missing person' would not go unnoticed, let alone 111.

However, such lies are being spread across the country through the state-controlled media and other channels at Nasheed's disposal. I fear that, as the electoral situation becomes more and more desperate for Nasheed's government, it will attempt to have me arrested unlawfully yet again. The recent arrest of numerous opposition MPs and opposition party leaders, the locking up of the Supreme Court by law enforcement officials on the orders of the government and Nasheed's refusal to ratify legislation passed by the Parliament indicates that he does not operate within the confines of the law, and will, therefore, attempt to have me arrested in spite of my innocence.

I recall that, in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 presidential election, international observers had praised the smooth handover of power. Mr. Nasheed had then stated publicly that he would ensure full security and privileges for me – as the Former President – so that I and my family may live in the Maldives in peace. This promise was not honoured. For almost two years now, I have not been able to go to the mosque to perform my prayers on Fridays, as I do not have adequate security. It has, in fact, been one whole year since a Law on Protection and Privileges for Former Presidents was passed and ratified. Under immense pressure from the government, the Maldives National Defense Force has been dragging its feet in implementing the protocols instituted by the concerned Parliamentary Standing-Committee to ensure adequate security provisions for me as prescribed under the above Law. As a result, my movement remains severely restricted.

I, therefore, seek your urgent attention, Mr. Prime Minister, in urging Nasheed to respect the country's Constitution and governing laws, and to ensure that the march towards modern democracy that I had set in motion from 2004, is not impeded in any way.

I have enclosed, herewith, a dossier on political developments in the Maldives, including detailed information on recent attempts to incarcerate me.

Yours sincerely,

Maumoon Abdul Gayoom
Former President of the Republic of Maldives